



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE
805 Southwest Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97205

March 24, 2016

(b) (6)

Portland, OR 97202

Dear (b) (6)

Thank you for your recent letter to EPA Administrator McCarthy. I have the privilege of replying on her behalf. We at EPA appreciate you taking the time to send us this letter about air quality concerns in Portland. Your letter is one of a few identical letters expressing these concerns. As a member of the greater Portland community myself, I take air quality concerns here seriously. We are continuing to work with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and others to help you and our community get the information needed and to help find solutions.

The DEQ found a significant "hot spot" of cadmium and arsenic during air sampling in Portland, Oregon near SE 22nd Ave. and Powell Blvd. The DEQ has been collecting additional air and soil samples in the affected area, and is working collaboratively with county, state and federal health agencies (Oregon Health Authority, Multnomah County Health Department, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, etc.) to assess and mitigate any impacts to public health. EPA is keeping fully informed about this developing situation and is actively supporting and assisting DEQ. EPA and ATSDR are evaluating these findings in relation to health standards.

Additional information, including a link to air sampling data and a map, can be found at: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/nwr/metalsemissions.htm>. DEQ's initial findings near the Bullseye Glass facility were that the monthly average is 49 times greater than the state annual air toxics benchmark for cadmium and 159 times the state annual air toxics benchmark for arsenic. For the most current information please see <http://saferair.oregon.gov>. Also, here are two links to The Oregon Health Authority's web pages that include more information such as fact sheets on health concerns, gardening, information for health care providers, and more:

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/newsadvisories/Pages/metals-emissions.aspx>.

https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/HealthyNeighborhoods/Documents/OHA_Healthy_Gardening_10_2013.pdf

While we at EPA are working with DEQ and others to address emissions from art and architectural glass manufacturing in Portland and nationally, we recognize that concerns about air toxics emissions extend beyond that sector. Areas of contamination not near the glass manufacturers were identified in data from a moss study of the US Forest Service. Using moss in this manner is a new approach, and there is a need to gain more information from further monitoring near the glass manufacturers that will help develop the best approach to monitor and act on other potential hotspots identified in the moss study.

The EPA is coordinating with DEQ to assess where potential public health impacts may be most serious. That information is helping to guide additional monitoring, sampling, and other actions. The DEQ has also committed to take action to address gaps in current state and federal regulations by establishing health or risk based standards for air toxics from industrial facilities. Input from stakeholders – including community members such as you – is important, and will be included in that process.

I'm including a few Questions and Answers with this letter that may be helpful to you. I've added you to my e-mail list and I will let you know when new information is available from EPA. Again, thank you for contacting the EPA. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Anthony L. Barber, Director
Oregon Operations Office

Enclosure

Some Questions and Answers

How is EPA involved and what is our role?

EPA Region 10 was briefed by DEQ one-week prior to their February 3, 2016 press release. DEQ is the lead agency for implementing the Clean Air Act in Oregon and we are supporting their efforts.

EPA Region 10 jointly inspected Bullseye Glass and Uroboros Glass facilities with DEQ on February 10, to better understand the processes being used and the pollution controls currently in place. This information will help us determine if further action is appropriate under EPA authority.

We are reviewing records to identify other potential sources in the affected area. Federal regional screening levels (RSL) are being compared with the DEQ state health benchmarks in relation to the amount of contamination found in the study to better understand the health impact. EPA continues to support the DEQ, OHA, MCHD and ATSDR efforts to assess, monitor and communicate information as it becomes available.

Are we determining or confirming the air pollution and/or the source?

DEQ is keeping EPA informed of their actions to monitor the situation and exposure levels. DEQ conducted air monitoring at nearby schools and day care centers. DEQ has been conducting additional air and soil sampling. EPA has provide DEQ with additional high volume air sampling equipment, filters, soil screening equipment and technical advice and assistance to support this effort.

What federal air regulations apply to glass manufacturing facilities?

EPA has three national standards that potentially apply to glass manufacturing plants. Whether a standard applies can depend on a number of factors, such as startup date, type of furnace, and the amount of glass produced.

- A National Emissions Standards for Inorganic Arsenic Emissions from Glass Manufacturing Plants (issued in 1986), which set emissions limits of 2.7 tons per year for arsenic, or 85 percent control for existing glass-melting furnaces; for new or modified glass melting furnaces, the limit is 0.44 tons or 85 percent control.
- Standards of Performance for Glass Manufacturing Plants (issued in 1980), which set performance standards to limit emissions particulate matter (PM). Limiting particulate matter also limits emissions of lead and other toxic metals.

A 2007 National Emissions Standard Hazardous Air Pollutants for Glass Manufacturing Area Sources, which sets emissions limits for plants that emit less than 10 tons a year of a single air toxic, or less than 25 tons a year of a combination of toxics. Manufacturers subject to the 2007 standards must meet either a PM limit of 0.2 pounds of PM per ton of glass produced, or a limit of 0.02 pounds of metal air toxics per ton of glass produced.

What type of pollution controls should glass manufacturers use?

Because glass melts at a very high temperature, a glass facility would need to use multiple steps to control their metal emissions – including changing the pollutants from a vapor to a particle using cooling or specialized sorbents and then removing the particles using a control device such as an electrostatic precipitator or a baghouse.

Design of controls for these facilities is customized and complex and may include multiple types of control equipment based on the types of glass the facility is making and the pollutants the processes emit.

Do we know any more about the USFS role or study mentioned in the news media?

The study was a collaborative effort between US Forest Service and DEQ to better understand the sources and distribution of toxic metals, including arsenic and cadmium, air pollution in Portland. EPA has requested a copy of the study as soon as it is published.